

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Selby Area School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

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Dates of On Site Visit: March 12-13, 2003

Date of Report: March 24, 2003

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- News release
- Screening announcement
- Radio announcement
- File reviews
- Enrollment Data

- Annual application for IDEA funds
- OSEC procedure manual
- Student referrals
- District staff surveys
- Preschool screening list
- Student referral list
- Parent surveys
- Teacher/administrator surveys
- Cooperative procedure manual
- Part B Application for funds
- Data table I, age and placement alternatives
- Parent rights brochure
- Data by age and placement alternative
- Comprehensive plan
- District dropout rate,
- SAT 9 data
- Staff interviews
- Exit data table H
- Content standards
- Interview Suspension and expulsion data
- OSEC procedure manual
- District handbook
- District policy and procedure manual
- Personnel data
- Staff certification
- Contract staff licenses
- Oahe Cooperative staff development policy
- District supervision/evaluation policy
- CSPD needs assessment data
- Teacher surveys

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the Selby Area School District (SASD) has established and effectively implemented an ongoing child find system.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded they have adequately trained, licensed and certified staff to work with children with disabilities. The district implements an appropriate personnel development system. The district provides for eligible children with disabilities that are voluntarily enrolled in private schools or facilities in accordance with requirements of IDEA. The district analyzes discipline data and revises procedures if significant discrepancies are occurring between the long-term suspension and expulsion rates for children with and without disabilities.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that referral documentation is available in all student files and that a referral system is in place; however, the district needs to review how it maintains the files for students referred and not evaluated.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team verified that child find procedures are a promising practice. Through interview, the monitoring team was informed that on-going child find activities included a scrolling announcement on the local television station.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified in need of improvement for general supervision. Through interview, it was stated that SASD is keeping track of referrals in an informal manner. Each teacher has kept a file of how many students were tested, how many qualified for services, and how many did not qualify for special education services. However; there is not a process in place where they compile, review and analyze the data of students referred but not evaluated for the entire district.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child count data
- District budget
- Annual IDEA application for funds
- Parent surveys
- Age and placement data table I
- Student file reviews
- Suspension/expulsion data tables C

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded SASD provides a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities and that the district has not suspended or expelled a child for more than 10 days.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Through interviews, the monitoring team determined that the district pre-school program is a promising practice. Pre-school services are available to all 4 and 5 year old children in the district including children with disabilities. The children are divided into two classes, one meeting in the morning and the other in

the afternoon, four day per week. The district Title I funded program employs a certified early childhood teacher to provide early childhood services.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- District evaluation list
- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews
- Compliance monitoring report
- Interview
- District procedure
- Parent surveys
- Teacher surveys
- Cooperative forms
- Evaluation list
- Evaluation manuals
- Eligibility technical assistance guide
- Override procedures
- MDT report form
- Oahe Cooperative procedure manual
- Table A general district information
- Prior notice/consent form

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that comprehensive evaluations are conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff and includes parent input. Evaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements. Reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that student files did not consistently contain functional assessment data. The district did not always provide appropriate written notice or obtain informed consent before assessments were administered to students. Students were dismissed from services without appropriate evaluation and district is in the process of implementing the use of a multidisciplinary team report/eligibility document for all students. Copies of the multidisciplinary team report needs to be provided to parents.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees that the district needs to consistently provide appropriate written notice/consent before assessments are administered to students. In one file reviewed, transition assessments were administered but not included on the prior notice/consent provided to parents. In another file the prior notice/consent listed the area of behavior to be evaluated. Consent was received, but there was no evaluation conducted in this area. The monitoring team agrees the district needs to continue to implement the use of a multidisciplinary team report/eligibility document for all students and consistently provide copies of the report to parents.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

A variety of assessment tools and strategies used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child to determine eligibility and program placement.

Cited from Functional Assessment for Special Education, February 5, 2002

“Functional assessment results or summaries must be incorporated into some form of evaluation report. For example, the special educator in district may write a report that details both the standardized achievement assessments given as well as the functional assessment that was administered to the student. Other districts may choose to have the psychologist include all of the ability testing, standardized and achievement testing, and the functional assessment into one consolidated report. Another option is to summarize the functional assessment on a separated form made by the district. Functional assessment results or summaries are then incorporated into the student’s present levels of performance statement within the IEP, with annual goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks developed based upon the student’s present levels of performance”.

The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. In 4 of 8 files reviewed, functional assessment was not included in the evaluation procedures; therefore, present levels of performance were not linked to evaluation. In other files, functional assessment was administered but not in the students suspected area of disability. For example, the area of disability is reading comprehension and functional assessment was administered in the area of math. Other files contained functional assessment relative to the student’s disability; however, the information was not summarized into a form of evaluation report resulting in no link between evaluation, present level of performance and the annual goals.

ARSD 24:05:25:06. Reevaluations

Reevaluations shall be conducted at least every three years for the purpose of determining whether a child continues to have a disability, the child continues to need special education and related services and whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

If no additional data are needed to determine continuing eligibility, the district shall notify the parents of that determination and reasons for it and of the right of the parent to request an assessment. The school district is not required to conduct an assessment unless requested to do so by the child's parents. However, a school district shall follow the procedures in this chapter before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability. The evaluation procedures described in this chapter are not required before the termination of a child's eligibility under this article due to graduation with a regular high school diploma, or exceeding the age eligibility for FAPE.

Through interview and a review of 2 student files evaluation procedures were not implemented prior to dismissal.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- OSEC procedure manual
- Parent rights brochure
- Prior notice form
- District comprehensive plan
- Surrogate parent technical assistance guide
- Prior notice/consent form
- Student file reviews
- Data table L, complaints and hearings, due process hearings
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Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that parents are fully informed of their parental rights and have the opportunity to inspect and review records and that the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified. Policies and procedures are in place for responding to requests for due process and complaint actions that ensure compliance.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher surveys
- Parent surveys
- Student file reviews
- Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Hearings
- Monitoring
- OSEC procedure manual
- Prior notice form
- Parent right brochure
- IEP form
- Student surveys
- Child count
- File spot checks

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that the IEP team contains appropriate membership and meets all identified responsibilities. The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that written notice is provided for IEP meetings and usually includes required content. The IEP does not consistently contain all required content. Issues of functional assessment and location of services are currently being addressed by the district. For students of transition age, the steering committee identified a need to increase the involvement of outside agency representation and to better document transition services provided to students.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for Individual Education Program as identified by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team could not validate the location of services, provision of written notice or content of the notice for IEP meetings as an area in need of improvement and will be considered to meet requirements. In all files reviewed, the location of service was documented and the prior notice for meetings contained the required content.

The monitoring team agrees that for students of transition age, the district needs to continue to involve outside agencies and appropriately document transition services provided to students.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program must include: A statement of how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured and how the student's parents will be regularly informed at least as often as parents of non-disabled students are informed and an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the regular class and in activities.

The monitoring team concluded through file reviews and staff interviews, that progress toward annual goals was not reported to parents for students at the elementary level.

The monitoring team confirmed in three of four student files that justification statements restated the students present levels of performance rather than describing why the instruction could not be conducted in the regular classroom setting.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parent surveys
- Student file reviews
- Data table F placement alternatives

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that the district usually ensures all children receive services in the LRE with the supports they need for their successful participation.

Validation Results

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needs improvement for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.

Surveys showed that 50% of general educators indicated that they receive adequate training, information, and supports to implement IEPs. The monitoring team feels this issue can be improved if training is provided for the staff about special education issues taken from a needs assessment.